

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 02866 070839Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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R 061445Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3879
INFO AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2866

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ET, PFOR, SU
SUBJ: MENGISTU'S VISIT TO USSR

REF: ADDIS ABABA 2448 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: MAY 6 ETHIOPIAN HERALD GAVE LEAD COVERAGE TO
MENGISTU VISIT TO MOSCOW AND HEADLINED SOVIET CONDEM-
NATION OF RED SEA POLICY OF IMPERIALIST-REACTIONARY
ARAB STATES. FULL TEXT BEING POUCHED TO AF/E. ETHIO-
SOVIET TALKS REFLECT CEMENTING OF ETHIO-SOVIET TIES,
COMMON CONCERN OVER OPPOSITION TO CONSERVATIVE ARAB
RED SEA SECURITY SCHEME. MENGISTU BEING ANNOINTED AS
LEADER OF PROGRESSIVE STATE, AND IN RETURN INDICATING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ADDIS 02866 070839Z

HIS WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT SOVIET LINE. END SUMMARY.

1. INITIAL ACCOUNTS REPORTED ADDIS INDICATES BOTH DOMESTIC AND
FOREIGN
POLICY DISCUSSED, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION PAID "TO
DEFENSE OF REVOLUTIONARY GAINS OF ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE
FROM INTRIGUES OF INTERNAL AND FOREIGN REACTION".

IT NOTES WITH SATISFACTION THAT SOCIAL PROCESSES IN ETHIOPIA CREATE FAVORABLE PREREQUISITES FOR ESSENTIAL PROGRESS IN FIELD OF BILATERAL COOPERATION AND STRESSES READINESS TO TAKE NECESSARY STEPS IN INTERESTS OF DEEPENING OF TRADITIONAL FRIENDLY RELATIONS IN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND OTHER FIELDS. BOTH SIDES STRESSED NECESSITY OF RALLYING ALL "PEACE FORCES" AND THEIR MUTUAL ACTION "IN STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISTS REACTION WHICH STRIVES TO DEAL BLOW TO DEMOCRATIC REGIMES AND WHOLE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN AFRICAN CONTINENT." COMMUNIQUE NOTED TALKS WILL BE CONTINUED.

2. AS REPORTED ADDIS, PRESIDENT PODGORNÝ STATED ACTIONS OF CERTAIN REACTIONARY ARAB REGIMES, SAUDI ARABIA IN PARTICULAR, TO CONVERT RED SEA REGION INTO THEIR EXCLUSIVE DOMAIN WAS VIOLATION OF LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF OTHER STATES AND PEOPLES OF AREA. HE STATED STEPS TAKEN BY CERTAIN REACTIONARY REGIMES TO SET UP EXCLUSIVE POLITICAL BLOC IN AREA AND HOLD NAVAL MANEUVERS CLOSE TO ETHIOPIAN COAST (REFTEL) CONTRARY TO AIM OF MAINTAINING PEACE AND SECURITY IN REGION. POLICY OF REACTIONARY ARABS AND IMPERIALISTS IS VIOLATION OF LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF STATES LIKE ETHIOPIA AND DETRIMENTAL TO FREE INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATION. PODGORNÝ INDICATED MOVE DESIGNED TO OPPOSE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE TAKEN PATH OF PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT. HE STATED SOVIET UNION RESOLUTELY SUPPORTED ETHIOPIA'S INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ADDIS 02866 070839Z

MENT AND THAT PROGRAM OF ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION HAD OPENED UP NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ETHIO-SOVIET RELATIONS ON "MORE SOLID AND BROADER FOUNDATION."

3. SWITCHING TO ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL MATTERS, PODGORNÝ REPORTEDLY INDICATED SOVIET UNION WELCOMED ETHIOPIA'S CHOICE OF SOCIALISM AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT MENGISTU WOULD HELP FURTHER STRENGTHEN TIES OF FRIENDSHIP. HE SINGLED OUT NATIONALITY QUESTION AS ONE OF "COMPLEX PROBLEMS" WHICH ENEMIES OF NEW STATE TRYING TO EXPLOIT TO SERVE THEIR OWN SELFISH ENDS. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING FOR EFFORTS BEING MADE BY EPMG TO SOLVE PROBLEM ON DEMOCRATIC BASIS. PODGORNÝ CLOSED BY STATING SOVIET UNION "MOST RESOLUTELY CONDEMNED" ANY INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

4. MENGISTU STATEMENT CONCENTRATED ON OPEN AGGRESSION

BY REACTIONARY FORCES AGAINST ETHIOPIAN TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. GUARDIAN COORDINATOR AND LEADER OF REACTIONARY FORCES IS IMPERIALISM, PARTICULARLY AMERICAN IMPERIALISM. RED SEA IS NOT PRIVATE PROPERTY OF ONE OR MORE COUNTRIES BUT IS FREE INTERNATIONAL SEAWAY. MENGISTU THANKED SOVIET UNION FOR ITS SUPPORT AS WELL AS THAT OF OTHER PROGRESSIVE COUNTRIES.

5. IN REFERENCE TO SOME OF PROBLEMS BEING FACED BY EPMG, MENGISTU NOTED THERE NO CLEAR DEMARCATION BETWEEN PROGRESSIVE AND REACTIONARY FORCES IN ETHIOPIA. SO-CALLED EDU, EPRP, AND ELF ARE AMONG REACTIONARY ELEMENTS WHICH HAVE NOW ALIGNED THEMSELVES WITH ARCH ENEMIES OF ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE. AMONG PROBLEMS FACING ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION ARE LACK OF WORKING CLASS PARTY, INADEQUATE POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, ORGANIZATION
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PAGE 04 ADDIS 02866 070839Z

AND ARMING OF MASSES, AND ECONOMIC SABOTAGE.

6. ON DJIBOUTI, CHAIRMAN MENGISTU EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SOON TO BE INDEPENDENT TERRITORY WILL MAKE NECESSARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEACE AND SECURITY OF RED SEA REGION.

7. COMMENT: INITIAL PRESS ACCOUNT EXPECTED LOVE FEAST. EPMG HAS NEVER EXPRESSED CONCERN IN PAST ABOUT RIGHTS OF INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATION IN RED SEA. WE ASSUME THIS LANGUAGE REFLECTION OF SOVIET CONCERN OVER MODERATE ARAB ACTIONS WHICH COULD AFFECT SOVIET MARITIME AND NAVAL ACCESS TO INDIAN OCEAN VIA RED SEA. SOVIET LANGUAGE ON NEED TO RESOLVE NATIONALITY QUESTION ON DEMOCRATIC BASIS NO DOUBT LINKED TO PROBLEMS VIS-A-VIS SOMALIA AND THE OGADEN, AND NEED TO PROVIDE SOME SOP LANGUAGE FOR SOMALI GOVT. MENGISTU STATEMENT ON NO CLEAR DEMARCATION BETWEEN PROGRESSIVE AND REACTIONARY FORCES ALSO CURIOUS AND MAY BE HIS WAY OF REMINDING HIS SOVIET HOSTS THAT MARXIST ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, WHICH IN ITS EARLY DAYS HAD CLANDESTINE SOVIET SUPPORT, IS JUST AS "REACTIONARY" AS OTHER ANTI-GOVT FORCES. MENGISTU STATEMENT ON DJIBOUTI CLEAR WARNING TO NEW STATE NOT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN RED SEA SECURITY" SCHEME.
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